

least 1905. Actually, he went on to say that even 1905 wasn't comparable because that was likely a clerical matter. So the experts don't really know the last time the murder rate shot up this much, but we know it was before the average American family had electricity or indoor plumbing. That was a long time ago.

Responding to this terrible trend should be very simple. It should be a no-brainer for elected officials at every level: more and better resources for more and better policing for more and better community safety.

Instead, liberal local officials across the country from city halls and city councils to right here in Congress have gotten caught up in the radicalism of "defund the police."

As one leftwing House Member put it, "Not only do we need to disinvest from police . . . we need to completely dismantle"—"dismantle"—her local police department." That was a Member of the Congress.

Another declared, "Policing in our country is inherently and intentionally racist."

One news story from last weekend reported that "a crowd of 100 people wreaked havoc in downtown Portland, Oregon, this week—smashing storefront windows, lighting dumpsters on fire and causing at least \$500,000 in damage—but police officers didn't stop them. Portland Police Bureau officials say that's because of legislation passed by Oregon lawmakers this year, which restricts the tools they can use to confront people vandalizing buildings and causing mayhem." So apparently it is OK in Portland to do those kinds of things because of legislation they passed out in Oregon.

While all of this is percolating, what is the Department of Justice focused on?

Where is the Attorney General training his firepower?

Well, here is the answer: Two weeks ago, Attorney General Garland published a special memorandum directing Federal law to focus specifically on parents who are dissatisfied with "woke" school boards and far-left indoctrination. You get the picture here.

The worst spike in the murder rate in over a century and the Attorney General wants main justice laser-focused on—listen to this—parents who are asking questions about their kids' curriculum. It is beyond parody.

To be perfectly clear, I never offered anything but condemnation for violence and threats in the political square, but local law enforcement is fully capable of handling isolated incidents where crimes are committed. There is absolutely no reason—none—for Attorney General Garland to pull this J. Edgar Hoover act on American parents. But these strange and warped priorities are defining the Biden administration's approach: soft on crime; heavy on indulging far-left fads.

Currently deadlocked in the Judiciary Committee is the nomination of

Rachael Rollins, a would-be U.S. Attorney who has a national reputation for being soft on crime during her time as a prosecutor. In her current role as district attorney, the nominee has said that prosecutors in her jurisdiction should—listen to this—decline to prosecute a whole laundry list of crimes—just decline to prosecute them. From shoplifting to trespassing, to drug possession with the intent to distribute, Ms. Rollins wants her county to be a place where these crimes get free passes.

And the Biden administration rewards this with a big promotion?

Mr. President, support for equal justice, support for law enforcement, and support for the innocent people they protect go hand in hand. It is time for the Biden administration to get serious about the rule of law.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING TIMUEL BLACK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was December 7, 1941, a young African-American man from the South Side of Chicago was celebrating his 23rd birthday. He was in a neighborhood tavern, and somebody bolted through the front door and cried out that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor.

In 1943, that same young man was inducted into the U.S. Army, a segregated institution at the time. He landed in Normandy within days of D-day. He fought across France in the Battle of the Bulge. While his unit regrouped, they heard rumors—horrible rumors—about a camp near Weimar, Germany. This young soldier and his commanding officer hopped into a jeep to see for themselves. What he witnessed at Buchenwald, the Nazi death camp, changed this man forever.

As he recalled in his memoir, his first thought was "this is what happened to my ancestors." This is what happens when human beings see others as less than human.

Then he made a vow to himself. He said:

I made an emotional decision that when I returned from the Army, the rest of my life would be spent trying to make [the place] where I live, and the bigger world, a place where all people could have peace and justice.

That soldier's name was Timuel Black. He kept that vow faithfully for 76 years. Tim Black was a foot soldier for justice. He died last week at the age of 102, living in the neighborhood that had been his home nearly all his life, a place that he personally called a "Sacred Ground," the South Side of Chicago.

His passing is our loss—to our city, our State, and our Nation. If you are not from Chicago, you may not know his name, but we all live in an America

that is better because Timuel Black helped shape it. He was a living link to some of our Nation's worst sins and our greatest achievements.

All four of Tim Black's grandparents were born into slavery. When he was a year old, Tim Black and his parents left Alabama and the terrorism of Jim Crow and headed to Chicago, part of the first wave of America's Great Migration. They settled on the South Side in a then-segregated neighborhood now known as Bronzeville.

After he served in World War II, Tim Black returned to Chicago. He graduated from Roosevelt University, earned a master's degree in history from the University of Chicago. He was teaching history in Chicago public schools in 1955 when he heard a young minister speaking on television, he was so moved that he decided, at his own expense, to fly to Montgomery, AL, to meet this man, a man by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1963, Dr. King and the great African-American labor leader A. Philip Randolph called on Tim Black. They asked him to organize Chicago's contingent to come to Washington for the great March on Washington. Three years later, Tim Black asked them to return the favor and he persuaded Dr. King to bring his campaign for racial justice to Chicago. Together, they pressed for an end to discriminatory housing laws that squeezed many of the city's Black residents into overpriced, ramshackle apartments in unsafe, segregated neighborhoods with few jobs and failing schools.

In 1975, after decades working at high schools, Tim Black became a professor of sociology, anthropology, and Black history at what is now known as Harold Washington College. He was the Griot of Chicago, who preserved the rich history of the Great Migration and Bronzeville. He was also a brilliant political strategist who understood how to use his power to help others.

So, in 1982, Harold Washington, who had been his friend since they were children, was representing their neighborhood in the U.S. House of Representatives. Professor Black and a few others went to Harold Washington and said: You have to run for mayor of Chicago.

Washington replied: "Sure. If you get 50,000 new Black voters and raise \$100,000, then I'll consider it."

Washington figured that was the end of it; they would never reach those goals. But Professor Tim Black started a fundraising drive and helped organize a voter registration campaign that ultimately registered not 100,000, not 50,000, but 263,000 new voters in Chicago, and he raised more than \$1 million for the Harold Washington campaign.

In 1983, with the support from voters from all backgrounds—Black, White, and Brown—Harold Washington became Chicago's first Black mayor.

A decade later, a young lawyer by the name of Barack Obama sought out

Professor Tim Black's guidance when he first considered running for office. Last month, President Obama returned to the South Side to break ground on the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson. Although Professor Black's failing health didn't allow him to attend in person, it is a good bet that ceremony couldn't have happened without him.

Mr. President, I was blessed to know Tim Black. When Barack Obama, my Senate colleague from Illinois, was elected President, I was given a handful of tickets to the inauguration. The first name that came to my mind was Tim Black. He had to be there, and his wife Zenobia Johnson-Black, a personal friend who volunteered to drive me in my first Senate campaign. Zenobia is a wonderful person. She is an exciting driver, and we had many escapades together.

So I invited Tim and Zenobia to come and sit in the best seats that I had for the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African-American President from the South Side of Chicago.

I was fortunate I knew Tim Black. I counted him as a friend. I was there sitting next to him at his 100th birthday party. It was a great night, and the man still had it all together and a great sense of humor.

Loretta and I send our condolences to his beloved wife of 40 years, Zenobia Johnson-Black, his daughter Ermetra, and his countless friends and students. A great man has left us. He will be missed.

FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Mr. President, tomorrow, the Senate will vote on whether to protect free and fair elections in America.

A big question we have to ask in the U.S. Senate is whether the right to vote and free and fair elections are worth any of our time.

You see, the first vote we have here is what is known as a motion to proceed. It is a basic question in the Senate: You want to talk about something? Is it important enough for your time? You want to bring it up here and say a few words about the right to vote in America?

That is the first vote. I think it is pretty simple.

Why wouldn't we, at this moment in history, with everything that is going on, spend some time talking about the right to vote?

Senator McCONNELL, the Republican leader, says, no, we shouldn't take any time to discuss the right to vote in the United States of America. He and many of our Republican colleagues are threatening to use the age-old weapon against civil rights, the filibuster, to stop even a conversation on the floor of the U.S. Senate about the right to vote.

That would make it the third time this year that Senate Republicans have used the filibuster to kill voting rights legislation. They filibustered For the People Act twice this year after it passed the House. They said then they

support voting rights, but not that voting rights bill. They said more compromise was needed. You can't reach compromise on anything until you talk about it.

We are going to have a motion to proceed to talk about voting rights on the floor of the Senate tomorrow. If they want to offer a compromise, if they want to get into a conversation or debate, that is the moment.

This empty Chamber—I wonder sometimes why we leave it the way it is. This would be a great meeting hall. We could rent it out for wedding receptions and have something productive happen on the floor of the U.S. Senate. But instead, this empty Chamber, day after day, finds ways to avoid the important issues of our time. That is sad.

There are very few of us who have been given this great honor and opportunity to serve in the Senate. We are supposed to come and talk about the things that matter in America.

Isn't the right to vote one of the most important things that matters in this country?

The Freedom to Vote Act is a compromise itself. It is based on a set of principles offered by Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia. Now, Senator MANCHIN has not concealed the fact that he didn't agree with the original bill, but in fairness to him, he sat down in good faith and bargained a compromised bill. He has worked exhaustively for months with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents to find some common ground. I salute him for that. That is what we all should be doing.

The Freedom to Vote Act includes reasonable national standards for a voter ID in States that require identification for in-person voting. Now, that is a big concession from the Democratic side because, although many of our States have a photo voter ID requirement, many do not, and we believe in some cases in the past it has been abused.

With the fundamental concept of a voter ID, I don't have any objection to, as long as it is managed and administered fairly. That is what we are setting out to do.

If our Republican colleagues are really worried about election integrity and making sure voters are who they say they are, wouldn't you think that they would at least vote to start the debate on the Freedom to Vote Act? That we would have a conversation in this empty Chamber that might even attract a handful of Senators on both sides of the aisle to talk about the right to vote in America in the year 2021 and beyond?

That just seems so basic.

Well, what the Republicans say is the Freedom to Vote Act is much more than just a debate topic; it is a Federal takeover of our elections.

That simply is not the case. The Freedom to Vote Act does not create any undue burden on any State. Instead, it sets reasonable, minimum

standards for voting access in all States, including automatic and same-day voter registration, 2 weeks of early voting, no-excuse mail-in voting. It establishes election day as a Federal holiday.

(Mr. PADILLA assumed the Chair.)

All of these proposals are consistent with the clear language of the Constitution. It will protect nonpartisan election officials from undue pressure and prevent politicians from overturning elections if they don't agree with voters' choices.

The Freedom to Vote Act makes it harder for billionaires and powerful corporations to buy elections. Let's be real honest, Members of Congress and others who run for office and set out to raise money, but the important fundraising is taking place in a mystery, in secret, with dark money that comes into an election with no indication of its source.

The Freedom to Vote Act is going to prevent the flow of foreign money into U.S. elections. Is there anybody who wants to argue for the premise that we should allow foreigners to invest in our election results or to try to influence the electorate, sometimes with misinformation and outright lies? I don't think they have any business interfering in our elections. I think most Americans agree with that. That is what the Freedom to Vote Act says.

In addition to that, dark money needs to get out of politics. If you want to stand up and support a candidate, so be it. But for goodness' sake, say who you are; identify yourself; let the American people know who is pushing one candidate or the other.

Organizations engaged in political spending will be required to tell the public who is giving them how much money. That is pretty simple, pretty obvious. There was a time when that level of disclosure was supported by the Republican minority leader in the Senate. I remember his speeches well on floor of the Senate. He shifted 180 degrees on the topic now.

Last fall, 2020, Americans braved a pandemic to vote in record numbers, but supporters of the former President nonetheless exhausted legal challenges and recounts seeking to validate the outrageous lie of election fraud, and their efforts went nowhere. Former President Trump went to 50 or 60 different courts to argue that Joe Biden didn't win the election. He couldn't produce a shred of evidence. All he had were the ramblings and gossip and fake news, if you will, on the internet. It didn't work.

Rudy Giuliani came up with some hair-brained schemes on behalf of President Trump: "Italy-gate," that somehow the Italians had satellites that controlled America's voting machinery. Ridiculous things.

When that didn't work, the former President decided he would just take over the Department of Justice. Our Judiciary Committee, which I serve on, Mr. President, went into extensive investigation of that and came up with